

Anna Hoover
Artist Statement

I found video storytelling in graduate school. I realized then that no matter how passionately I wrote about Indigenous Art History, reading art history books was never going to be what people did for fun on the weekend or in the evenings. I understood that providing short videos available online, my audience would grow exponentially, therefore allowing many more people to consider the ways that art shares important stories. With this simple transformative awareness, I decided to also pursue a degree in Indigenous Documentary Filmmaking. I could never have imagined the outcome of this decision at the time because that choice of direction molds me to this day, and provides me with rewarding opportunities to enhance and share the rich lives of Others.

Oral history is integral to our being; it molds our foundation of history, genealogy, utilitarian skills and ongoing life lessons. Through storytelling, we learn how to behave and interpret good reasons to continue sustainable life-practices. Narrative forms of knowledge entertain us in ways that help us to laugh, cry, heal and grow. Demonstration and interactive learning is a function of storytelling and knowledge sharing.

For millennia, these deep pools of empowering knowledge have solely been documented through the reciting of collective memories by orators; expressed live and in person. The harsh reality is that many of these important people work within imposed economies that relegate traditional cultural roles to the wayside. In turn – I observe within my region of the Alaska Peninsula and the eastern Aleutian Islands – many of our stories and age-old memories are being forgotten, to only exist within the silent cosmos. With another generation of elders passing away, we are losing our tangible connection to ancient ways and it is a crucial time to record these respected people in video and audio recordings.

Cinematic storytelling that inspires our young people and reminds them how amazing their relatives are, imparts a sense of potentiality; it shows us ways these instructions on balanced and healthy ways of living can be celebrated and nurtured into the future. The big screen is important to contemporary youth and provides grand illustrations in a familiar medium. Indigenous film gives our communities ways to see faces they can relate to – familiar scenes and colors; providing a space to witness stories of inspirational Indigenous people that take place in varying environments, on many continents. I have always admired Inuit Director Zacharias Kunuk who provides us with cinematic stories that do not revolve around money and the greed-based economy of today.

This 2018, I have just attended the 9th Annual Walter Kaitz Foundation Hollywood Creative Forum and will be attending the International Sami Film Institute/York University ARCTIC CHILLS scriptwriting workshop, in Kautokeino, Norway, March 2018. I am exploring a new platform for a broad audience to consider the ways Alaska Natives are sharing important stories in film. I am passionate about bringing Alaskan perspectives and stories to mainstream networks and screens.

I watch new release movies objectively – I see constant changes in the ways stories are being told – I am enjoying finding my voice in this important conversation that shapes our international culture. In my film career, I plan to take advantage of the vivid colors, sights and sounds that exist in rural Alaska and rural Alaskan lives and share this profound experience with the world.